COLORADO
Department of
Higher Education

Priority: R-3
Data and Research Personnel Shore Up
FY 2015-16 Request

Cost and FTE

- The Department of Higher Education requests $190,268 reappropriated funds (0.0 FTE) to ensure sustainable funding for portions of four data and research positions' salary and benefits. These critical Department positions have been funded with grants that are not continuing, the loss of which threatens the availability of essential research and data which support critical State initiatives. The source of the reappropriated funds is department indirect costs.

Current Program

- Almost half of the positions on the Department's Data and Research Team are currently grant funded with dollars that are not continuing. These positions/portions of positions include the following: (1) 0.3 FTE portion of Data Systems Engineer/Web Developer; (2) 1.0 FTE portion Research and Policy Analyst, (2) 0.5 FTE portion of Director of Information Systems, and (4) 0.2 FTE portion of the Chief Research Officer.

Problem or Opportunity

- Over half of the Data and Research FTE at the Department have been funded with grant funds since FY 2012-13. These grants are coming to an end and new grant resources are not available for FY 2015-16. Without appropriate funding, several critical functions of the Data and Research team will cease.
- Significant efforts have been made by the Department to secure grant funding from all known sources.

Consequences of Problem

- The resources for policy makers and other customers that could be jeopardized include: District-at-a-Glance website and customized district reports, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid Completion website, College Measures website, Concurrent Enrollment Report, Postsecondary Outcomes and Success Report, CCHE website, Complete College America, and over 150 information requests, among others. Without adequate funding, a number of critical initiatives that inform policy within and management of higher education within the Department will cease.

Proposed Solution

- The Department requests funding to sustain the Data and Research Team's current positions to ensure the resources to complete its numerous projects and information requests.

COLORADO
Department of Higher Education

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Lt. Governor Joseph Garcia
Executive Director

FY 2015-16 Funding Request | November 1, 2014

Department Priority: R-3
Request Detail: Data and Research Personnel Shore Up

Summary of Incremental Funding Change for FY 2015-16	Total Funds	Reappropriated Funds
Data and Research Personnel Shore Up	$190,268	$190,268

The Department of Higher Education requests $190,268 reappropriated funds (0.0 FTE) to ensure funding for portions of four data and research positions. These critical Department positions have been funded with grants that are not continuing, the loss of which threatens the availability of essential research and data which support critical State initiatives. The source of the reappropriated funds is department indirect costs.

Problem or Opportunity:

Request Summary

The Colorado Department of Higher Education requests $190,268 reappropriated funds to fund portions of existing positions which are funded with grant dollars that are no longer available. The source of the reappropriated funds is Department indirect costs. These four positions are currently grant funded and perform numerous tasks that are critical to the Department and align with the Department's mission. These positions/portions of positions include the following: (1) 0.3 FTE Data Systems Engineer/Web Developer; (2) 1.0 FTE Research and Policy Analyst, (3) 0.5 FTE Director of Information Systems, and (4) 0.2 FTE portion of the Chief Research Officer. The Department currently has authority within its existing FTE authorization and therefore is not requesting any additional FTE (designations). However, without adequate funding a number of critical initiatives that inform policy within and management of higher education within the Department will cease.

Problem and Opportunity

The Data and Research team is a critical service division within the Colorado Department of Higher Education. The Data and Research team is comprised of both an information technology (IT) unit that manages data collection, data management, and data sharing, and a research unit that produces numerous legislatively required and other reports, assists in the implementation of legislation and statewide policies, measures institutional and statewide outcomes and communicates best practices. The IT unit has four (4.0 FTE) team members and the research unit has five (5.0 FTE) team members. Numerous members of the Data and Research team consistently work 60 to 70 hours per week on average to handle the current workload demands.

Over half of the Data and Research FTE at the Department have been funded with grant funds since FY 2012-13. These grants are coming to an end and, despite significant efforts, new grant resources have not

been secured for FY 2015-16. Without appropriate funding, several critical functions of the Data and Research team will cease.

For example, the District-at-a-Glance website (http://highered.colorado.gov/Data/DistrictHSSummary.aspx) and customized district reports that have been nationally recognized are currently produced by a grant funded FTE. Without the additional funding, the research unit at the Department will not have adequate resources to continue the K-12 feedback reports. The Colorado Department of Higher Education, Colorado's K-12 districts, Local Education Agencies, parents, students, and K-12 partners rely on this reporting function to measure their postsecondary outcomes at the district and high school level.

Additionally, numerous K-12 districts use this information in their accountability reporting. If the Department does not receive the additional funding, it will no longer be able to provide this service. Elimination of this reporting which could result in implementation delays for these districts' accountability plans. Last year, the Research and Policy Analyst responsible for these reports worked individually with over 20 K-12 districts on customized reporting and data information that they used to directly influence practice and policy at their schools. This is just one example of the data reporting and innovation that will not be possible in the next fiscal year without adequate funding.

The Data and Research team prides itself on its customer focused approach and necessary service they provide to the Department's many partners. In FY 2013-14 the Data and Research team completed over 150 data request projects, in a timely and customer focused manner in addition to its published reports. In addition to serving the needs of our public and private colleges and universities, the team's customers included such partners as the Joint Budget Committee, the Office of State Planning and Budgeting, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado Workforce Development Council, K-12 Districts, scholarship foundations, non-profit organizations, and legislators.

Earlier this year, the team underwent the extensive and beneficial LEAN program specifically around their data sharing process to improve a timely and accurate delivery of data to our customers. In order to continue to meet the growing needs of our customers, the Data and Research team must be fully staffed and funded through a reliable and sustainable mechanism. Decreased staff in the Data and Research division will make it difficult to meet the Department's statutorily required reporting duties. The team will not be able to fulfill outside data requests and provide service to our numerous partners. Additionally, the quality and quantity of the Department's information reporting, due to the reduced analytical and technical capacities, will be diminished.

Previous General Fund Shortfall Resulted in Grant Requests and Funding

To counter budget reductions which began in FY 2012-13, the Department looked for grant funding to sustain staff and the demanding workload. During this same time period, the demand from policy makers and interested parties for higher education related data and research increased substantially. This strategy specifically affected the Data and Research team, as five of the nine members are currently sustained, either full or partially, though grant funds. As these grants come to an end and the workload expands, the Department seeks to secure sustainable funds for these positions.

The Department and this team are faced with the fortuitous opportunity of having more work than in previous years due to recent legislation demands and to the expansion of our data collection and data sharing abilities. The Department currently collects student level data from the 28 public institutions of higher education, the Area Vocational Schools, and from 52 Private Postsecondary Institutions. Additionally, the Department actively works with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to link

postsecondary records to K-12 records; the Department has also been working with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) to link postsecondary data records to wage/employment records. These kinds of continuous or "longitudinal" data can produce powerful information concerning students' participation across education systems and later labor market outcomes—critical information for educators and policy makers alike.

With a reduced staff, the ability to effectively utilize these critical data resources and provide valuable information will be diminished. The ability to provide meaningful outputs will be greatly compromised. For example, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion website (https://highered.colorado.gov/fafsa/default.aspxa is another DHE initiative that has been nationally recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. This initiative has helped districts and high schools in the state determine where they need to focus their efforts to help students complete a FAFSA. Additionally, the Research and Data team provides over thirty districts customized reports of their specific students who need help finalizing or completing the FAFSA. Colorado has become a national model for the Department's FAFSA Completion portal, however, this program is currently grant funded and, it too, will end without secured funds.

Significant Efforts Taken to Correct the Problem

The Department has spent significant time and resources over the past year attempting to secure additional grant funding from a variety of sources. Despite our best efforts, we have not been able to obtain the necessary resources from local or national foundations. Additionally, the Data and Research staff members are critical to the overall mission and functionality of the Department, are currently performing Department level tasks and roles, and therefore these positions should be securely and sustainably funded.

The Department wants to acknowledge the General Assembly's FY 2013-14 support of data and information based policy through the additional funding for a Research Analyst and Communications Manager. These positions have been fully utilized and are successfully fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. The Research Analyst has been nationally recognized for her work on the Job Skills Report and has become a fast expert on the supply and demand continuum of higher education into the workforce.   The Research Analyst is currently working on a STEM specific supply and demand report and has assisted in countless projects for the Data and Research team. The need for her position and her expertise continues to grow along with her workload.

Additionally, the Communications Manager has been critical to the success of the reports and information prepared by the Data and Research division.   The Communications Manager prepares publically consumable summaries of all of DHE's technical reports and has enhanced the outreach and messaging of this information. Recently, the staff was an integral part of helping CNN highlight Colorado's success in concurrent enrollment, as outlined in the Department's annual Concurrent Enrollment report, on a nationally televised segment.   The staff's messaging of the data has made the Data and Research team's reports more accessible to a wider audience and has increased the Department's public outreach efforts. The role at the Department and the assistance on the Data and Research team continues to expand. Despite these two positions, the workload and service demands of the division continue to grow and justify additional, sustainable support to ensure the Department keeps the critical members of this team.

The Colorado Department of Higher Education requests $190,268 reappropriated funds to fund portions of existing positions' salary and benefits which are funded with grant dollars that are no longer available. The Department's source of reappropriated funds would be department indirect cost recoveries. These positions include: (1) 0.3 FTE Data Systems Engineer/Web Developer; (2) 1.0 FTE Research and Policy Analyst, (3) 0.5 FTE Director of Information Systems, and (4) 0.2 FTE portion of the Chief Research Officer. Each of these positions is critical to the success and mission of the Department. Without an adequate and secure funding source, the Department will not have the resources to complete the projects listed below because the remaining Data and Research team members will not be able to be absorb the additional responsibilities into their already full workloads.

Data Systems Engineer/Web Developer (0.3 FTE portion, $23,291 salary and benefits)

The following tasks are performed by the Data Systems Engineer and Web Developer and serve the needs of the entire department, as well as, numerous partners.

- Develops and supports database driven web applications for all divisions of CDHE, including DPOS and GEAR UP.
  - Data tools on the CDHE website, including District-at-a-Glance
  - FAFSA completion project
  - Student complaints
  - GT Pathways course management and searchable database
  - DPOS school administrative database
  - Degree Authorization Act administrative database
  - Intranet applications for the Data & Research and Academic Affairs divisions

- Extracts and processes data for legislative reports and data sharing requests with other departments, institutions, districts, partners and researchers.
  - Data support for Progress & Outcomes, Concurrent Enrollment, Remedial legislative reports
  - College Measures, including UI, ISIR/FAFSA, FEDES, NSC, WRIS 2
  - Lead point of contact for import and management of Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Unemployment data
  - Point of contact for and data handling of FAFSA data for Colorado school districts
  - Technical point of contact for US Department of Education for FAFSA data agreement
  - Serves role as data analyst and data provider for various data requests from Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Local Education Agencies, media outlets, Governor's office, JBC, and others
- Technical support to DHE staff managing website content.

There are several high stakes projects for which the Data Systems Engineer/Web Developer is the sole data analyst, data provider and developer. These projects include District-at-a-Glance, the FAFSA Completion Initiative, the College Measures website and reporting, and the coordinator of the Unemployment Insurance or wage record data from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. With funding, the Data Systems Engineer will be able to continue to maintain the valuable District-at-a-Glance website, FAFSA Completion website, College Measures website, and related wage data reporting.

Research and Policy Analyst (1.0 FTE portion, $88,100 salary and benefits)

The following tasks are performed by the Research and Policy Analyst, whose role is the lynchpin between secondary and postsecondary education in Colorado in regards to data reporting. This position is currently 100% grant funded and without funding all non-legislative functions will end.

- o Annual Concurrent Enrollment Report
- o Annual Postsecondary Outcomes and Success Report
- o District-at-a-Glance reporting and individual district PDFs
- o Customized District reports on student postsecondary outcomes
- o DHE representative for K-12 partners and customers including Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Association of School Boards, and Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4KIDS)
- o Postsecondary STEM representative for numerous STEM groups and initiatives
- o Coordinator of the quarterly interagency data sharing meeting (members include Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, early childhood, etc.)
- o Public outreach of data information at over 20 local meetings and conferences a year
- o Fulfills over 40 data requests for external customers

The tasks listed above include several projects for which the Research and Policy Analyst has sole responsibility and for which the DHE has received national recognition. With secure and sustainable funding, the Research and Policy Analyst will be able to continue aligning K-12 and postsecondary work, providing a valuable service to districts and colleges via information, and continue the Department's public outreach efforts. The following tasks are performed by the Director of Information Systems and impact the needs of internal and external customers.

Director of Information Systems (0.5 FTE portion, $53,936 salary and benefits)

Web & Database Projects
- DHE Website Redesign & Server Installation
- DHE College & Universities Interactive Data Tool
  - o New web enabled data including Graduation, Remedial, Retention rates, Concurrent, STEM, UAF
- DHE Data & Research upgrade (Telerik Tools)
- SURDS - SASID matching process for Institutions
- Purchase, Install secure file transfer software

Research
- Update Business Intelligence (BI) tables/tools with SURDS data
- SB 11-052 (Performance Funding) Preparation and Strategic Planning
- Performance Metrics Data Collection & Model Implementation
- Reverse Transfer Student Consent Project (Supervising)
- National Student Clearinghouse updates
- Complete College America (Consulting Role)

Chief Research Officer (0.2 FTE portion, $24,941 salary and benefits)

The following tasks as performed by the Chief Research Officer, would cease without the 0.2 FTE proper funding.

- Data governance and agreement of Department of Education's ISIR/FAFSA data to support the FAFSA completion project
- Data support to CDE regarding numerous requests such as Race to the Top reporting and the Data Quality Campaign reporting
- Data agreement negotiations and data sharing between DHE and local districts to support the District-at-a-Glance project
- Data governance of the CDLE's Unemployment Insurance data
- The ability to fulfill data requests in a timely and accurately manner for our stakeholders

Funding of the Data and Research FTE through Reappropriated Funds will have a direct effect on the Department's ability to fulfill its customers' needs in a timely and accurate manner. Working at capacity will allow us to meet the division's growing data request projects and provide usable information to stakeholders and the public. The funding will provide sustainability to national recognized initiatives and enhance the Department of Higher Education's ability to meet its mission and goals. The beneficiaries of this proposed solution are DHE's customers and include: Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, K-12 districts, Local Education Agencies, postsecondary institutions, Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative, the Joint Budget Committee, the Office of State Planning and Budgeting, non-profit educational organizations, and other partners.

Consequences if the Proposed Funding is Not Approved

In order for the Data and Research team to continue to provide its current level of customer service and produce the nationally recognized and unique products described above, it needs to maintain its current staffing level. The Data and Research FTE discussed in this request currently fit into the Department's FTE allocation, but are grant funded. The cost of transferring these staff members to reappropriated funds would be $190,268.

If this request is not funded, a significant amount of work the Data and Research team currently conducts at the Department will cease. These initiatives include District-at-a-Glance reporting and website, the FAFSA Completion Initiative, the College Measures reporting and website, and the ability to meet the data requests of our customers. Additionally, the ability to conduct increasingly relevant research to inform policy will be diminished due to limited resources. Colorado's elected officials and leaders, as well as the general public, will not have access to the same quality of information regarding our public and private institutions of higher education, specifically the linkages between K-12, the postsecondary system, and the workforce.

Anticipated Outcomes:

The anticipated outcomes if this request is funded will be the continued production of the vital reports and data that has resulted in the aligning of the workforce pipeline, including K-12, postsecondary and labor. If the Data and Research team is able to keep its current staff intact by discontinuing its current reliance on grant funding, the Department will not have to make hard choices about which of its valuable data and

reports it will be able to produce with diminished resources. Additionally, the Department will be able to keep up with the increase in data requests from current partners and customers, many of which help to shape and inform public policy. The Department's mission and purpose depend on a robust and skilled Data and Research team.

Assumptions and Calculations:

Position Title	FY 14-15 DHE FTE	FY 15-16 RF FTE Request	FY14-15 Base Annualized Salary	FY15-16 RF Requested Salary	HLD DHE Share [1]	PERA Medicare DHE Share [2]	FY 15-16 RF Requested Annual Benefit	FY15-16 RF Requested Compensation
Data Systems Engineer/Web Developer	1.0	0.3	60,000	18,000	1,970	3,321	5,291	23,291
Research and Policy Analyst	1.0	1.0	61,455	61,455	15,307	11,338	26,645	88,100
Director of Information Systems	1.0	0.5	78,000	39,000	7,740	7,196	14,936	53,936
Chief Research Officer	1.0	0.2	100,000	20,000	1,251	3,690	4,941	24,941

Total Requested Salary:	138,455
Total Requested Benefits:	51,813
Total RF Request:	190,268

[1] "HLD DHE Share" based on the actual DHE share of HLD in FY 14-15.